

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSCE-00 NSC-05 INR-05 CIAE-00

SP-02 PM-03 DODE-00 /037 W

-----120621Z 003456 /12

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FM AMEMBASSY SANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1195

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

S E C R E T SANA 1783

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, YE

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT AL-HAMDI ON AL-AHMAR LETTER

REF: SANA 1747

BEGIN SUMMARY. ONEVENING MAY 9 I PAID CALL ON PPRESIDENT AL-HAMDI TO DISCUSS AL-AHMAR LETTER. AL-HAMDI EXPRESSED DEEP APPRECIATION FOR MY HAVING CONSULTED WITH HIM ABOUT THIS MATTER AND RECOMMENDED THAT I NOT ACCEPT AL-AHMAR'S

INVITATION TO VISIT KHAMR, LEST I UNWITTINGLY LEND MYSELF TO EXPLOITATION BY AL-AHMAR. AL-HAMDI ALSO RECOMMENDED THAT I LIMIT MYSELF TO AN ORAL REPLY IN WHICH I WOULD OFFER TO CONVEY ANY MESSAGE FROM AL-AHMAR TO AL-HAMDI IF LATTER SO DESIRES. MEETING WITH AL-HAMDI WAS BEST I HAVE HAD THUS FAR. AL-HAMDI WAS GENUINELY PLEASED BY MY HAVING TAKEN INITIATIVE TO CALL AND ENGAGED IN FRANK DISCUSSION ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS INCLUDING INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION AS WELL AS YEMEN'S FUTURE. LATTER SUBJECTS WILL BE REPORTED BY SEPTELS. END SUMMARY.

1. I ORIGINALLY PLANNED TO SUBMIT A XOMMENT ON THE AL-AHMAR

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LETTER THE GIST OF WHICH WAS REPORTED BY REFTL. IN THE COMMENT I WOULD HAVE INFORMED THE DEPARTMENT THAT I PLANNED TO CALL ON AL-HAMDI OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS TO DISCUSS THE LETTER AS WELL AS TO GET A READING ON THECURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION. YESTERDAY (MAY 9), HOWEVER, LEARNING THAT PRESIDENT AL-HAMDI PLANNED TO LEAVE FOR JIDDA UNEXPECTEDLY I DECIDED TO DROP BY HIS HOUSE THE SAME

EVENING TO PAY AN INFORMAL CALL, AS HE HAS URGED ME TO DO IN THE PAST WHENEVER I FELT I NEEDED TO SEE HIM PRIVATELY. THE MEETING WAS THE BEST I HAVE HAD THUS FAR WITH AL-HAMDI CHARACTERIZED BY OPENNESS AS WELL AS A READINESS TO DISCUSS A VARIETY OF SUBJECTS.

2. AFTER EXPLAINING TO AL-HAMDI THE MAIN REASON FOR MY

VISIT AND DESCRIBING IN GENERAL TERMS (I DID NOT TAKE A COPY OF THE LETTER WITH ME) THE CONTENTS OF THE LETTER I TOLD AL-HAMDI THAT I WAS CALLING BOTH TO OBTAIN HIS VIEWS ABOUT THE LETTER AS WELL AS TO ASSURE HIM THAT THE UNITED STATES CONTINUES TO VIEW HIS GOVERNMENT AS THE BEST VEHICLE FOR THE CONTINUATION OF POLITICAL STABILITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN YEMEN. I ALSO TOLD AL-HAMDI THAT I WAS NOT COMING TO OFFER TO MEDIATE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND AL-AHMAR AS I THOUGHT THAT WOULD BE PRESUMPTUOUS FOR A FOREIGN STATE TO MEDIATE BETWEEN A GOVERNMENT AND ONE OF ITS CITIZENS. I CONTINUED THAT NEITHER DID I WISH TO ADD FUEL TO THE FLAMES EMPHASIZING THAT THE US HAS NOT AND WILL NOT INTERFERE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF YEMEN. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, IF THE PRESIDENT THOUGHT THAT THE US GOVERNMENT COULD BE HELPFUL I WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONVEY HIS IDEAS OR SUGGESTIONS TO MY GOVERNMENT.

3. AL-HAMDI BEGAN BY EXPRESSING HIS SINCERE APPRECIATION FOR MY HAVING COME TO DISUCSSS THIS MATTER WITH HIM, STRESSING THAT IN NO WAY WAS I IMPOSING ON HIM BY CALLING UNANNOUNCED. HE CONTINUED THAT HE AND HIS GOVERNMENT CONSIDER THE US
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AND ITS AMBASSADOR AS FREINDS OF YEMEN WHO HAVE NOT INTERFERED IN ANY WAY IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE COUNTRY BUT RATHER HAVE TRIED TO PLAY A POSITIVE ROLE IN TRYING TO HELP YEMEN SOLVE ITS PROBLEMS BOTH INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY.

4. TURNING TO THE LETTER AL-HAMDI SAID THAT WITHOUT HAVING A CHANCE TO READ THE LETTER HIMSELF HE WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO ANALYSE IN DETAIL THE MOTIVES FOR THE LETTER BUT HE ASSUMED THAT AL-AHMAR WOULD HAVE ONE OF TWO PURPOSES, EITHER A) TO USE THE LETTER AND MY REPLY FOR PROPAGANDA PURPOSES AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT, OR B) TO TRY TO DRAW THE US AND THE PERHAPS OTHER COUNTRIES INTO YEMEN'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS WITH THE IDEA OF EXASPERBATING THEM.

5. AL-HAMDI CONTINUED THAT WHILE DEEPLY APPRECIATING MY OFFER TO BE OF ASSISTANCE HE DID NOT THINK IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA FOR ME TO ACCEPT AL-AHMAR'S INVITATION TO VISIT KHAMR BECAUSE A) AL-AHMAR MIGHT WELL USE MY VISIT AS A WAY OF IMPRESSING ON HIS NAIVE TRIBAL FOLLOWERS THAT HE IS IN

A POSITION TO "SUMMON" THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO KHAMR AS
THOUGH AL-AHMAR WERE A SOVEREIGN RULER, B) ONCE KNOWN,
OTHER AMBASSADORS WOULD CERTAINLY ALSO RECEIVE LETTERS
FROM AL-AHMAR AND ASK TO GO TO KHAMR WHICH WOULD PUT THE
CENTRAL GOVERNMENT IN THE EMBARRASSING PSOTION OF HAVING
TO SAY NO WHILE HAVING SAID YES TO THE US AMBASSADOR, AND
C) SUCH A VISIT WOULD UNDERCUT THE EFFORTS OF THE CENTRAL
GOVERNMENT TO ESTABLISH ONCE AND FOR ALL THE IDEA THAT
THERE IS BUT ONE GOVERNMENT IN YEMEN AND NOT MANY PETTY
REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS (DUWAILAT).

6. AL-HAMDI CONTINUED THAT HE THOUGHT THE BEST WAY FOR
ME TO REPLY TO THE AL-AHAMAR LETTER WOULD BE TO SEND AN
ORAL MESSAGE BACK TO ALAHMAR IN WHICH I EXPRESSED THE
HOPE THAT ALL YEMENIS COULD COOPERATE TOGETHER FOR THE
BENEIIT OF YEMEN WHILE EMPHASIZING THAT THE GOVERNMENT AND
ESPECIALLY AL-HAMDI WERE ALWAYS READY TO MEET WITH AL-AHMAR
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AT ANY TIME AND IN ANY PLACE TO DISUCSS WAYS TO SETTLE
THEIR DIFFERENCES. AL-HAMDI ADDED THA I COULD ALSO
MENTION TO ALAHMAR THT I WOULD BE WILLING TO PASS A
MESSAGE FROM AL-AHMAR TO AL-HAMDI ON THE SUBJECT IF AL-AHMAR
SO DESIRED.

7. COMMENT: ALHAMDI'S REACTION WAS PRETTY MUCH WAHT I
EXPECTED AND WHAT I HOPED FOR. I DO NOT THINK IT WOULD BE
A GOOD IDEA FOR THE US TO GET TOO DEEPLY INVOLVED IN THE
INTERNAL MANEUVERINGS AND MACHINATIONS WHICH ARE
CHARACTERISTIC OF POLITICAL LIFE HERE. AT THE
SAME TIME, HOWEVER, I THOUGHT IT ONLY PROPER TO PROTECT
MY CREDIBILITY WITH AL-HAMDI AND TELL HIM ABOUT HE LETTER
WHICH I AM SURE GIVEN SANA'S SMALL-TOWN ATMOSPHERE HE WOULD
HAVE SOON LEARNED ABOUT ANYWAY. OF COOURSE, BY SEEING AL-HAMDI
AND DISCUSSING THIS LETTER, THERE IS ALWAYS THE RISK OF
FURTHER ALIENATING ALAHMAR BUT I THINK ON BALANCE AND
IN THE LONG TERM THIS WAS A RISK WORTH TAKING AS FAR AS
OVERALL US INTERESTS ARE CONCERNED. IN ANY EVENT I INTEND
TO PASS THE ORAL MESSAGE TO ALAHMAR AS SUGGESTED BY
ALHAMDI AND WILL SEE WHAT ALAHMAR'S NEXT MOVE IS. (BY
SEPARATE CABLES I WILL BE REPORTING ON OTHER SUBJECTS
COVERED IN MY CONVERSATION WITH ALHAMDI WHICH PROVIDE
INTER ALIA USEFUL INSIGHT INTO AL-HAMDI'S VIEWS ON THE
CURRENT INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION AND ON YEMEN'S
POLITICAL FUTURE.)
SCOTES

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTERVENTION, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, DIPLOMATIC PROTESTS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 10-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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TAGS: PINT, YE, (AL-AHMAR, ABADALLAH BIN HUSSAIN), (AL-HAMDI, IBRAHIM)
To: STATE
Type: TE
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